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ESTONIA PASSES NEW CITIZENSHIP LAW. The Estonian parliament on 19 January adopted a new citizenship law by a vote of 60 to 6, BNS reports. Under the previous legislation, people could apply for citizenship after two years residency in the country and could be naturalized one year after submitting the application. The new law requires five years residency to apply for citizenship. It also bans Estonian citizens from having dual citizenship but allows such citizenship for ethnic Estonians who are citizens of another country. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

STATUS OF FORMER SOVIET CITIZENS IN LATVIA. The law on the status of former Soviet citizens who are citizens of neither Latvia nor another state has been approved by the Saeima on its second reading, BNS and Interfax report on 19 January. The law, which will go into effect when approved on its third reading, gives former Soviet citizens rights such as free movement within Latvia, free exit from and entry into the country, and freedom of expression and religion. But it does not grant them the right, enjoyed by Latvian citizens, to take part in elections, buy land, or possess weapons for self-defense. Noncitizen passports will be issued to people who were permanent residents of Latvia before 1 July 1992, unless they retired from service in the Soviet army after 4 May 1990. Saeima Chairman Anatolijs Gorbunovs said the approval of the law on its second reading will greatly improve Latvia's chances of becoming a member of the Council of Europe in February. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.

RUSSIAN DUMA ASKS LITHUANIA NOT TO DEPORT EX-SOVIET ACTIVISTS. The Russian State Duma on 18 January issued an appeal to the Lithuanian parliament not to deport four Russian citizens who were active in the pro-Soviet organization Edinstvo. The four have been asked to leave Lithuania by 22 January. Parliament chairman Ceslovas Jursenas told RFE/RL's Lithuanian Service on 19 January that it was unlikely the parliament would discuss a response to the appeal but that the parliament's leadership would probably reply officially next week after it determines whether the deportation order conforms with Lithuanian law. -- Saulius Girnius, OMRI, Inc.